



# In Transit May/June 2009

A Newsletter for King County Metro Transit Employees



*From the desk  
of the General  
Manager*

**Big things are  
happening...fast!**

So many major transit changes are coming to the region in the next 12 months, if you blink you might miss one. These changes will influence public transportation around Puget Sound for decades to come.

First, I must say how proud I am of Metro and all of you. In the first week of May we hosted the combined 2009 American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Bus & Paratransit Conference, International Bus Roadeo, and Bus Rapid Transit Conference. More than 1,300 transit colleagues and guests attended these events.

- The International Roadeo for operators and mechanics ran like clockwork under the guidance of Metro's Safety and Training, Fleet Engineering, and Operations groups and with support from Power and Facilities, Design and Construction, and Marketing and Information Services.
- Technical tours of South Base, the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel, the Transit Communications Control Center, our bus rapid transit elements, and the Access Control Center were excellent by all reports.
- The host forum on Metro's efforts to create a sustainable transportation system was well received and

*Continued on page 2*



**Long time coming:** Trains and buses are now sharing the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel, as planners envisioned when tunnel construction began in 1987.

## Rail comes to tunnel

**W**ith 53 of Metro's light rail operators trained, certified, and ready to go, Link began pre-revenue service testing on May 18. This 60-day no-passenger "dress rehearsal" allows staff members to fully prepare for the start of revenue service, which is scheduled for July 18.

The intent of pre-revenue service is to simulate normal service and experience all possible service disruptions and restorations. The first week, trains began intermittent operation in the tunnel during non-peak hours with 10-minute headways. Service has gradually been increased to 7.5-minute headways to approximate revenue service conditions. Rail Operations staff members are also participating in emergency and disaster exercises in coordination with the Seattle police and fire departments and other agencies. After several weeks of day and swing shifts, pre-revenue service will expand to the full 5 a.m.–1 a.m. service schedule that will be offered to the public on July 18.

On Saturday, May 30, the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel reopened for weekend service for the first time since 2005 (Saturdays) and 2000 (Sundays). The current

*Continued on page 6*

### In this issue

ORCA goes live .....	2	Transit Eastside campus .....	6
Kudos .....	3	Short shots .....	7
APTA conference .....	4	On the move .....	8

## General Manager

our involvement in many of the educational sessions and panel discussions contributed greatly to the overall success of the conferences.

Events began on a high note when, in the opening session, APTA recognized us with a Certificate of Merit for exceptional achievement in bus safety. Things continued on a sustained high from there. Many of you were involved in these events and in the vital, behind-the-scene organizing activities. Please know how much all of us appreciated your efforts.

In addition to playing host to the North American transit industry, Metro has been quite busy on other fronts over the past few months. To name just a few:

- **ORCA (One Regional Card for All) is now a reality, thanks to the hard work and dedication of many of you.**
- **Metro celebrated the milestone of carrying its 3 billionth rider. We can all take pride in that achievement.**
- **Pre-revenue operation of Sound Transit's Link light rail by Metro's Rail Group has begun. Buses and trains shared the tunnel for the first time, finally realizing the vision of those who opened the tunnel in 1990. With help from many Metro work groups, tunnel hours were extended into the night and on weekends.**
- **Public hearings were held on proposed modifications to bus services in southeast Seattle and southwest King County that will connect neighborhoods to Link stations, avoid duplication, and improve transit services after Link light rail begins revenue operation in July.**
- **East Base and Bellevue Base Operations merged into an Eastside Campus to achieve more efficient use of resources.**
- **Metro Online is getting a new look. Improvements and upgrades—many coming from lessons learned during the 2008 year-end snowstorms and their aftermaths—will keep riders better informed. The redesigned home page includes links to a county news blog and related Twitter posts,**

# ORCA goes live

**T**ransit customers across the Puget Sound region now have a new “smart” fare card that lets them travel more easily on and between bus, train, ferry, vanpool, and paratransit services. It's called ORCA (One Regional Card for All).

The ORCA card makes looking for correct change a thing of the past. When boarding, ORCA users simply tap their cards on an electronic reader. ORCA replaces about 300 various passes, tickets, and transfers with a single card that works on all seven of the major public transportation systems serving King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties (see list in box).

Together, these agencies serve more than half of Washington's population and carry more than 500,000 riders daily.

Metro and its ORCA partners have put enormous energy into making the new fare system a reality. ORCA was introduced to customers on April 20 in a limited launch to allow the agencies to identify and resolve technical issues before a major publicity effort begins in June.



### ORCA can be used on:

- Community Transit
- Everett Transit
- Kitsap Transit
- Metro Transit
- Pierce Transit
- Sound Transit
- Washington State Ferries

The phase-in of ORCA will continue through the end of the year as current transit passes expire and are replaced by ORCA cards. To learn more, visit the ORCA Web site at [www.orcacard.com](http://www.orcacard.com).



**Pass Distribution Coordinator Dianna Sumabat demonstrates her ORCA tapping technique as Operator Rick Sepolen looks on.**

Customer understanding, acceptance, and use will determine the ultimate success of ORCA. Through its outreach efforts and customer service centers, Metro is taking extra steps to help customers fully appreciate the advantages of ORCA, especially when they first buy and use the new card. Similarly, bus operators have received training and have been asked to show patience while the new system gets underway.

a place to sign up for e-mailed transit alerts, and “Eye on Your Metro Commute,” a new feature that tracks bus reroutes and service disruptions in real time. If you haven't visited lately, check it out at [metro.kingcounty.gov](http://metro.kingcounty.gov).

achievement for Metro Transit. While the fiscal environment has been and continues to be challenging, just look at what's possible!

Thank you for your continued hard work and dedication.

— Kevin Desmond, General Manager

These and other activities signal a period of exciting, rapid change and



# KUDOS

## IN TRANSIT

### Transit operators of the month

#### March 2009

Atlantic Base: **Nikolay Romanyuk**  
 Bellevue Base: **Vance McLane**  
 Central Base: **Bernard Hall**  
 East Base: (operator declined)  
 North Base: **Kenneth Eline**  
 Ryerson Base: **Eric Dumadag**  
 South Base: **Clarence Taylor**

#### April 2009

Atlantic Base: **Leola Gilbert**  
 Bellevue Base: **Jon Murphy**  
 Central Base: **Kevin Sherrell**  
 East Base: **Al Lapoint**  
 North Base: **Janis Fisher**  
 Ryerson Base: **Joseph Hursey**  
 South Base: **Sonia Williams**

employees a part of the celebration. Employee volunteers handed out commemorative buttons, and Metro posted photos submitted by riders and staff members on the county's Flickr page. Visitors to Metro Online could also select shoe icons to represent their carbon footprints, and could watch a special "Metro thanks you" video.



**Members of the Ryerson Base Safety Team bask in the glory of Ryerson's first safety win. Shown are (front row) John Bouie, Michael Teeter, Walt Slade; (middle row) Darryl Russell, Richard Yount, Drew Bobich; (back row) Sandy Sander, Rita Kelley, Penny Scott. Not pictured is Althea Lowe.**

■ **Ryerson cinches safety win**—Ryerson Base Operations won Metro's 2008 base safety award by posting a nearly one-third (32.3 percent) reduction in collision accidents. East Base finished second with a 20-percent reduction. "This is the first time Ryerson Base has won this award and we are all very proud," said Ryerson Supervisor **Abdul Alidina**, thanking the Ryerson Safety Awareness Team and all base employees for the hard work that went into achieving the honor.

■ **Teamwork brings new passenger onboard**—Metro's paratransit service, Access Transportation, serves people with disabilities who cannot ride our regular buses. During a recent eligibility assessment for Access, a reviewer discovered a problem with the customer's regular bus zone and referred it to Power and Facilities, who used grant money to correct the problem. The customer was then referred to Metro's free Transit Instruction Program. After successfully completing the program, the customer is now able to independently ride a regular Metro bus, and is very happy. And Metro is saving money, since providing an Access trip costs far more than providing a comparable trip on a fixed-route bus.



**Metro customers submitted photos of themselves as part of our "3 billionth rider" celebration.**

■ **Celebrating a milestone in ways old and new**—On March 31, Metro proudly carried its 3 billionth rider since the agency began operations on January 1, 1973. Metro marked the occasion by making its customers and



**A minor modification of his bus stop has allowed Erik Parkin to use Metro's regular bus service instead of Access Transportation service.**



**General Manager Kevin Desmond speaks during the opening session.**



**Jack Whisner, left, and Ref Lindmark, both from Service Development, answer a guest's questions at the Host Table in the Sheraton Hotel.**



**Mary Stevens of Transit Operations, Yolanda Geyen of Design and Construction, Carolyn Murakami of the General Manager's Office, and Judi Price of Vehicle Maintenance served breakfast to the Bus Roadeo setup committee.**

# National conference lets Metro shine

**M**etro Transit took center stage as we hosted the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) 2009 Bus & Paratransit Conference, International Bus Roadeo, and Bus Rapid Transit Conference May 1-6. Then-King County Executive **Ron Sims** and Metro General Manager **Kevin Desmond** welcomed more than 1,300 transit agency and industry representatives, including our Puget Sound transit agency peers.

Technical and training sessions covered many topics including accessibility, service planning and marketing, safety and security and more. Those sessions and other best-practice forums, panel discussions, technical tours, and committee meetings provided valuable opportunities to learn from and collaborate with industry leaders and peers.

The Bus Rapid Transit Conference, co-sponsored by the Transportation Research Board and APTA, focused on bus rapid transit as an effective, affordable way to provide enhanced public transportation service in urban areas.

In addition to having lead roles in several sessions and providing technical tours of our operations and facilities, Metro hosted a forum on sustainability and transit. Staff members shared information about our efforts to create a sustainable transportation system that pollutes less, consumes less imported fossil fuel, and serves the mobility needs of a growing population. The forum highlighted our longstanding commitments to progressive environmental policies and investments.

The ever-popular International Bus Roadeo brought together the country's top transit operators and maintenance teams to compete in bus driving and troubleshooting events. **Harold Lemmon** (former Atlantic Base operator, currently a supervisor-in-training) represented Metro in the 40-foot coach operator competition. Our maintenance team consisted of **Jerrod (Jerry) McKenna**, **Jim Stack**, and **Bryan Stites**. Overall, "Team Metro" did us proud, finishing sixth out of 34 teams in the combined scoring of operator and maintenance team points.



**Employee volunteers posed as difficult passengers in the Customer Challenge. Pictured, left to right, are Carol Alexander, Henry Garrett, Stan Asis, Elaine Ducken, and Debra Billups challenging the operator contestant. Billups used her considerable musical talent to torment the contestant and her fellow "passengers."**





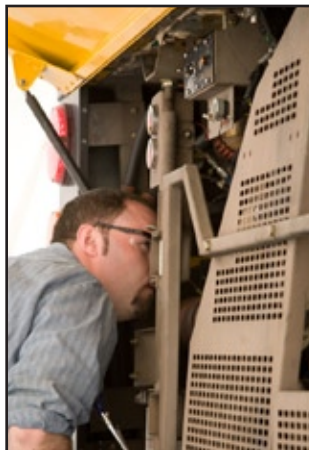
An operator contestant enters a gauntlet of tightly spaced barrels during the driving portion of the Bus Rodeo.



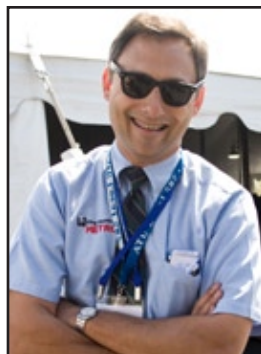
Dan Brand, transit maintenance analyst, oversees the Maintenance Rodeo events.



Kim Martin, Vehicle Maintenance, Fleet Engineering, shows a Metro bus to APTA guests at the bus rodeo.



Mechanic Jerrod (Jerry) McKenna investigates a problem.



Supervisor-in-training Harold Lemmon represented Metro in the Bus Rodeo operator competition.



Lemmon gets advice from many-time local rodeo champion Mike Grady.



The prototype RapidRide shelter was set up for viewing during the Bus Rodeo.

## Metro Transit named to 2009 Bus Safety Award

**M**etro received a much-coveted American Public Transportation Association (APTA) 2009 Bus Safety Award at the opening session of the annual APTA Bus and Paratransit Conference.

The Certificate of Merit award recognizes public transportation organizations and contractors for positive safety records and dedication to improving safety.



Metro's maintenance team—Jerrod (Jerry) McKenna, Jim Stack, and Bryan Stites—troubleshoot an ailing engine during the Bus Rodeo.

# Transit Operations forms Eastside campus

**M**etro consolidated operations at East Base and Bellevue Base in May, creating a new Eastside Campus. The two bases had operated independently since Bellevue Base opened in 1982. The joint campus will enable broader management support and more efficient use of resources. The change only affects Operations; Vehicle Maintenance will still have employees at each base.



**Michael List**

“While budget issues helped drive the decision, the creation of a new Eastside Campus for operations is a good example of continuous improvement in Transit,” said Eastside Campus Supervisor **Michael List**. “Creating one management team for the Eastside will challenge us to make better use of limited resources while maintaining quality service to our customers.”

The Eastside Campus will allow transit planners to create more-efficient assignments for the 681 transit operators who collectively provide some 876,000 annual service hours from the two bases. The move also reduced the number of base supervisors from seven to six. “It will take time to sort out what can and cannot be done,” List said. “We know the revenue forecast for 2009 and beyond, so we need to continue focusing on our core mission—providing safe, dependable service—and remain professional in interacting with the public and one another in these challenging times.”

The transition began a few months ago and should be complete by the end of summer. Administrative support for the combined campus is provided by **Liz Slater** and **Janice Larson**. Base chiefs are **Anne Callahan**, **Yvonne Greenwood**, **Keith Howe**, **Ken Johnston**, **Jan Voss**, and **Cheryl Washington**.



**Metro's two Eastside bases are joining forces for greater efficiency.**

*Continued from page 1*

## Rail testing

tunnel hours are 5 a.m. to 1 a.m. Monday through Saturday, and 6 a.m. to 12 a.m. on Sundays.

With weekly tunnel operating hours doubling (from 70 to almost 140), tunnel downtime will dramatically decrease and staff members from the Rail Section, Transit Operations, Power and Facilities, and Metro

Transit Police will be working harder to keep things running smoothly.

“We’re ready for the extended hours and increased numbers of customers using the downtown bus tunnel,” said Tunnel Facilities Chief **Don Brewer**. “Many dedicated individuals throughout the agency have given their full energies to making [joint operations in the tunnel] a reality.”

# Summer construction season heats up

**S**ummer is road construction time. Without planning and mitigation, road projects can severely impact Metro and our customers. Fortunately, Metro works with staff members from city and state road agencies to determine potential impacts long before their projects begin. We identify service reroutes, schedule changes, and traffic-signal adjustments to reduce expected impacts. In some instances, we provide businesses with incentives to shift employees from cars to other travel modes.

Many Transit work groups are involved in these efforts, including Service Quality, Power and Facilities, Scheduling, Service Planning, Speed and Reliability, and Market Development.

This summer will see major paving projects on several streets in downtown Seattle, including Second and Fourth avenues, Stewart and Virginia streets, and Olive Way. Trolley overhead wires will be affected, bus zones closed or relocated, layover space displaced and traffic delayed due to full or partial lane closures, affecting traffic and bus service at all times of day.

In addition to the paving projects in downtown Seattle, major projects are planned or underway throughout King County that could significantly affect Metro services for extended periods of time. “We are making a big effort to coordinate with the Washington State and Seattle departments of transportation, internal departments, and contractors at each phase of each project during this *huge* construction season,” said Service Quality Chief **Paul Rodgers**. “Communication among all parties and with the public is a key to weathering its effects.”



# SHORT SHOTS IN TRANSIT

News briefs in and around the Transit Division



The Water Taxi sports a new logo and new management.

■ **Water taxi weighs anchor**—The former Elliott Bay Water Taxi is now the King County Water Taxi (West Seattle-Downtown Seattle route), and is managed by the Department of Transportation's new Marine Division for the also-new King County Ferry District. The 250-passenger foot ferry launched its 2009 season in April with a community celebration at Seacrest Marina Park in West Seattle. For more information, visit the Water Taxi's Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/watertaxi](http://www.kingcounty.gov/watertaxi).

■ **Commuter van orientation goes online**—Rideshare Operations has launched an online commuter-van orientation for drivers and bookkeepers in Metro VanPool and VanShare groups. The debut of this service in early March fulfilled a longstanding request to provide commuter-van group members with a more flexible and convenient way to satisfy their orientation requirements. In the six weeks following its launch, 259 drivers and 60 bookkeepers had completed the online orientation—the equivalent of 11 in-person group orientations—and represented a savings of about \$8,300

in staff overtime costs. Creation of the online program was funded by Transit Now and managed by **Jason Halvorson**.

## ■ Women in Trades Career Fair—



**Women in Trades Career Fair participants build tool boxes at Metro's hands-on area.**

Metro took an active role in the 30th Annual Washington Women in Trades Career Fair, held March 27 at the Seattle Center. Dubbed the "Super Bowl of northwest career fairs," the event featured more than 80 exhibitors and was attended by some 670 students from 32 schools, plus hundreds of work-ready women and men. Metro Transit bus operators, rail operators, tradeswomen, maintenance workers, and human resource staff members assisted hundreds of people at Metro's indoor information table and outdoor hands-on area, which won first prize for the best outdoor exhibit and activity (building a small wood toolbox).

Continued from page 8

## On the move

### Vehicle Maintenance

**Mark Parsons**, electronic technician — March 9

**Patrick Post**, equipment service worker — March 30

**Michael Williams**, equipment service worker — March 30

### In Our Thoughts

**Elaine Ohlson (Chapman) Berg**, retired chief (Operations Training) — passed away April 17

**Sharon Sanderman**, retired equipment dispatcher (Vehicle Maintenance) — passed away March 25

## In Transit online

Current and past issues of *In Transit* are available on the King County Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/kcdot/aboutus/intransit](http://www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/kcdot/aboutus/intransit)

## In Transit



*We'll Get You There*

If you have any questions, comments or story ideas, send them to ***In Transit***, MS KSC-TR-0824, or contact **Anna Clemenger**: 206-263-6482 or [anna.clemenger@kingcounty.gov](mailto:anna.clemenger@kingcounty.gov).

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# ON THE MOVE

Transit Division retirements, promotions/job changes, new hires, and remembrances

## Retirements

### A Very Special Mention

**Mary Solomon**, confidential secretary II (KCDOT Director's Office; formerly with Metro Transit Manager's Office) — April 29; 32 years

### Design and Construction

**Jim Murray**, engineer VI — May 5; 25+ years

**Helmuth Schmitt**, designer IV — April 3; 23+ years

### Information Technology

**Tony Longo**, project/program manager IV (APC Project Management and Operations) — May 31; 42+ years

### Operations

#### **Non-operators:**

**Carol Neff**, administrative specialist III (Transit Control Center) — April 1; 33 years

#### **Operators:**

**Ronald E. Wieland** (East Base) — May 1; 42 years

### Power and Facilities

**Jack Baldwin**, utility lineman (Power Distribution) — Feb. 28; 8+ years

**Chet Barton**, utility lineman (Power Distribution) — April 18; 10 years

**Kristen Black**, building operating engineer (Building Maintenance) — April 3; 20 years

**Gary Ogden**, transportation planner II — April 30; 30+ years

### Vehicle Maintenance

**Jim Whitesel**, mechanic — July 10; 30+ years

## Promotions and Job Changes

### Metro Transit Police

**Deputy Chris Adams** to SeaTac patrol from MTP Patrol (2nd shift)

**Deputy Mark Christianson** to MTP patrol (1st shift) from patrol deputy (Precinct 2, North)

**Sergeant Tom Flanagan** to MTP patrol (3rd shift) from patrol sergeant (Precinct 4, Burien/White Center)

**Deputy Luke Hillman** to street crimes detective (Precinct 3, Maple Valley) from MTP Patrol (2nd shift)

**Sergeant Bill Hurley** to MTP patrol (1st shift) from patrol sergeant (Precinct 3, Maple Valley)

**Deputy Matt Paul** to MTP patrol (4th shift) from patrol deputy (Precinct 4, Burien/White Center)

### Operations

**Carol Alexander** to administrative specialist III (Transit Control Center) from Service Development (Transit Route Facilities)

**Rudy Allen** to supervisor from chief (Service Quality)

**Anthony Cox** to operator (East Base) from rail operator (Light Rail)

**Brian Mauer** to first-line supervisor (Service Quality) from rail supervisor (Light Rail)

**David Vestal** to communications coordinator from acting senior schedule planner (Scheduling)

### Rail

**Glenn Brockett** to rail supervisor from first-line supervisor (base dispatch, Operations)

**Michael Erickson** to facilities and SCADA chief from senior SCADA systems specialist (Rail)

**Clifford Hill** to rail service worker from equipment service worker (Vehicle Maintenance)

**Steven Hoyt** to rail supervisor from first-line supervisor (Operations Training)

**Dar-an Kung** to rail facilities mechanic from facilities constructor (Power and Facilities)

**Ian Rush** to rail service worker from equipment service worker (Vehicle Maintenance)

Transferred to rail operator from bus operator (base): **Paul Baenen** (North), **Kimberly Baird** (Ryerson), **Claude Brown** (Ryerson), **Steve Chichester** (Ryerson), **Michael Cooper** (Ryerson), **Dale Edwards** (East), **Timothy Finch** (Ryerson), **Kevin Goodman** (Bellevue), **John Kwelese** (Ryerson), **Benjamin Limargo** (North), **Shahab Yazdani** (Central)

### Vehicle Maintenance

**Melonie Couch** to administrative specialist III from technical information processing specialist III

## New Hires

### Design and Construction

**Mike Usen**, environmental planner III — April 6

### Information Technology

**Robert Levinson**, project/program manager IV (term-limited) — March 17

**Royal Linden**, project/program manager IV (term-limited) — March 18

### Power and Facilities

**Karl Freudenstein**, utility lineman — March 23

**Mark McDoniel**, utility lineman — March 16

### Rail

**Robert Blackburn**, VM chief — March 30

**Joanne Kauk**, material service center (MSC) worker — Feb. 24

**Paul Zimny**, electrical worker — March 16

*Continued on page 7*